

Nassau Inn  
Princeton, Mercer County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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Nassau Inn  
Princeton, Mercer County, New Jersey

Owner: Razed July 28, 1937

Date of Erection: West wing 1757

Architect:

Builder:

Present Condition: Good

Number of Stories: Older section three; new section  
four stories

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - brick;  
south elevation stucco

Interior walls - plaster

Inside brick chimneys

Roof - originally pitch,  
has been raised in front  
and rear to make additional  
story

Historical Data:

The present building was built in three sections. The oldest is the west wing which was erected in 1757 as the private residence of Judge Thomas Leonard; it became a hotel in 1769 and has remained one ever since. During the eighteenth

century, it was called "The Sign of the College" and "College Inn". The east wing was originally another hotel called "The Mansion House" built in 1836 by Charles Steadman and was absorbed forty years later by the older hostelry.

The trustees of the college held their "moistly generous commencement dinners" here until the Revolutionary War and rising prices broke it up. Committee meetings of the New Jersey Legislature were often held here. The commencement ball of Princeton University was usually held here; later it was transferred to the campus. The most famous proprietor was John Joline from 1812-1836 when the inn was in its hey-day. James K. Pauling and Washington Irving visited Princeton in 1813 and used the inn as the setting for the scene of "Lay of the Scottish Fiddle".

There is little left of the original building which is the oldest hotel in Princeton in use. There still remains the hand-hewn beams in the cellar and parts of the old wine bins; sections of the south and west walls are original. The building is to be razed to make way for Princeton center.

Bibliography:

Collins, V. L. Princeton Past and Present  
Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1931

  
Supervising Historian

Approved:

  
SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.  
District Officer

WJ

3/28/57